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ETON SIXTY YEARS SINCE

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

I WAS strangely and unfortunately brought up; by a man of high talent and clear judgment on most points, but whose honest purpose to do his duty as a parent was marred by a disposition to run counter to the ways of the world, a violent temper, and a despotic nature.

I left the domestic fireside—a roaring one, in every sense of the word—for the smallest of country schools, which slumbered in the arms of the simplest of Dominie Sampsons. But he had been an old Eton acquaintance of my father.

‘Can your puppy swim?’

‘We’ll see. Just chuck him into the water.’

Even so was I, before my eyes were open, thrown headlong into the torrent of life and sent to Eton, though not from any unworthy motive, as a good many were. I have known a low man who starved himself and his family for seven years, in hopes that the eldest son might pick up useful acquaintances among the great, at the great school, where the poor lad only did pick up luxurious habits and fashionable airs; crippled with which, he had to come and help his father in his little business, to earn the family’s bread. No; the reason why I had to go was, that my father and his brothers had gone before me. One of them had been renowned there as a boyish Hercules—a sort of Admirable Crichton, with the learning left out. He went to Eton an orphan, only six years old. His wardrobe, I have heard, did not then contain a pocket-handkerchief, and when he had a hat, it was generally without a crown. I only remember him an elaborately made-up gentleman, and of some mark in his county, but old before his time; for Sampsons beat themselves; and ‘with gray, gray hair did Sir Ranald come hame.’

‘Why, Jack, you’re as gray as a badger!’ was the flattering and sentimental greeting with which I heard my father welcome his return.

A very different sort of Etonian was I—a long, helpless boy, who, at thirteen years of age, had quite outgrown his strength. At my good little

school, boxing was not allowed; and I found myself among a mob of six hundred young devils, of whom I was expected to fight any one of my inches. How much in fighting depends on a favourable entry, Dandie Dimmont has told the world; and they must acknowledge my chance was not a good one.

My father is just handing me over to my Eton tutor, whose physiognomy I, a youthful Layater, am anxiously studying, and forming unfavourable conclusions from it. I see a small man, with a snappish, sneering manner, a limping gait, and a very pale complexion. Scandal said he drank. He was far from popular; but his failings were, on the whole, forgiven for the sake of that limp, which he owed to a blow from a cricket-bat, the usual weapon of the boys in their fights with the bargemen. He, as a master, was exerting himself to keep the peace on one of those occasions, and was felled in the *mêlée*. Feeling like an old boy, he would never tell who had crippled him. Honest fellow! he was not a pleasant man. After a little *viva-voce* work, he sent me up to a spare garret to complete my trial. I well remember a dreary winter hour or two, passed within four white-washed walls—my only companions a wooden chair, a deal table, a tallow-candle, no fire, and a theme. I did it—and too well; for I was placed so high in the school as to be an object of some envy and boyish malice, with which my fists were as yet ill able to contend.

I had gone over to my dame’s to supper. Still a strikingly handsome woman. When she had filled her purse, she married a tutor who had done the like, and retired to a good living. She must have ruled the parish, and might have come to be a Mrs Proudie—but for the cholera. Thoroughly well qualified for her position was she. Born and bred at Oxford among what are there called ‘men,’ she was too much for us boys. Keen in money-matters, she kept about the worst table in Eton, but contrived to make her house put up with it. The customary remedy for such an evil was called a *brosier* (*Spurs*, I will eat up). By concerted arrangement, on a given day, everything on table was devoured or pocketed, and

more called for, till larder and store-room were emptied. This was understood as a vote of censure. Such a thing had just happened next door. The dame, a delicate, broken-down lady, went in tears to the head-master. All he could do, probably, was not to laugh till her back was turned. We tried it once, but found a *mattresse femme* to deal with. Apparently, we were winning our battle—though nearly choked in the moment of victory—when she just whispered two words to her maid, who disappeared to return with an enormous cheese, as strong as it was big. She cut away liberally, telling us, with a smile, not to spare it, for there was another bigger than that. We never tried a brosier again. She had a happy knack of managing her boys—would get you flogged, relentlessly, on slight provocation, and then, in spite of yourself, laugh you out of all ill-humour with her.

No footman in a decent family would now submit to such bedroom accommodation as was ours, for which the first men in England were then content to pay so highly. We slept in those unwholesome things called press-bedsteads, which turned on hinges into presses closed during the day, for our bedroom was our living-room also. It was a common trick, when a boy was asleep, to turn him up, and fasten the doors. There he was, standing on his head, and struggling with suffocation. Fortunately, boys are seldom apoplectic, and I never knew any harm done this way. A single room was charged extra; there were not many, and they were considered luxuries. So was a 'study'—a closet just big enough to hold the smallest of all possible tables—or even a flap doing duty for one—a few book-shelves, and a stool. Such was mine. Some had room for that treasure of an Eton boy, a bureau. The pigeon-holes held 'old copies'; and I have known one of the many drawers tenanted by a colony of tame mice. The charm of your study was, besides the dignity of the thing, that you could lock yourself in, and do your verses in peace. The first time I did so, the silence of the night and my poetical musings were rudely interrupted by the ticking of a death-watch. Now, my nursery education had included the whole mystery of ghosts, and their kindred superstitions. I was learned even in points of etiquette proper to be observed in cases of intercourse with these 'transparencies.' The maids had nearly addled my brains with this as a child, and it was still a very weak point with me. Thus suddenly assailed, and at such close quarters, I turned round hastily to flee, jammed the key in the lock, and was at the mercy of the death-watch. Having kicked myself free at last, and luckily undiscovered, I sneaked up to bed, and for some time only visited my study by daylight. I have known a panic in an army from as slight a cause.

We were three in my room. One of them—own son of his father, and he was a bishop, well known in his day as 'Bishop Bluster'—became notorious as the worst bully in all Eton. Unusual muscular power and toughness, a quick eye, and a hard head, had made him formidable with his fists, and given scope to a cruel and tyrannous disposition. The fall of that young tyrant was sudden and edifying. Immediately on leaving Eton, the cock of the school fell into the hands of a low woman, very much older than himself, married her, entered the church, subsided into a remote curacy, and I never heard more of him.

My new life is beginning to dawn upon me with a certain promise of grandeur. I get an 'order' for cups and saucers, knives and forks, &c., of my own, and go proudly 'up town' to choose the patterns. I draw rations of tea and sugar. So much rolls and butter are mine daily; and I am initiated, with a pleasurable awe, into the mysteries of 'tick'; for the dinner and supper only are public, and provided by my dame; and it is vulgar to attend the latter. Breakfast and tea we have in our own rooms, at our own epicurean discretion.

Custom allows me one fortnight as a free boy, and then I become a slave—a little white slave. Fagging is a system, as regular as the organised as the feudal system. The sixth and ninth forms are the masters; the 'remove' is neutral; all the rest are 'lower boys'—*fags*, the 'Servants-of-all-work Company,' with unlimited liability as to thrashing. Say there are seven fifth-form and eleven lower boys in a house—the first seven of them will be distributed by the captain according to seniority, and then the other four to the four senior fifth form, who will each have two servants out of livery. I remember a house where there was only one fifth-form and seventeen lower boys. He arranged his household as a Lord Chamberlain might his department. He had his cook, and his poet (who did his verses for him); he had also a regular staff to write out his 'punishments.' As, in common parlance, 'virtue' is used to signify one only out of the many perfections of womankind, so, in Eton slang, a 'punishment' meant one particular sort of infliction. 'What tricks are you playing, Duncombe minor? Write out and translate two hundred lines of Homer, sir!' That was a punishment; and the system was carried to excess. Piles upon piles of punishments might be seen on any tutor's table. If the offender was so ill provided with drudges as to depend on his own exertions, he used to write a few lines at the beginning and end, and fill in with any rubbish, trusting, as he well might, that the master would never wade through his dreary task. Magnates coolly handed them over to their fags to do. The masters must have known this; but habit prevailed, and the sins of the fifth-form continued to be visited on lower boys. I wonder whether the punishment-writing could be utilised in any way as a training for what in the Foreign Office is called 'précis-writing'?

At all hours of the day or night, any work your master required, you were bound to do; and this was not all—this was only the home department. Once out of your own house, any fifth-form boy might pounce on you in like manner. Going into school, going to my 'tutor,' or fagging for somebody else—these were the only received excuses. There was one universal penalty for all faults—a licking, at the discretion of your master, and one alternative—You fag for me, or you fight me. This led to some of the most interesting fights; but they were few. Yet there was a delicate distinction. 'Would you fag for So-and-so?'—'No! But I'd shin him.' I might not feel equal to a regular combat, yet I would resist—in this wise: I would close with him, throw my head into his chest, and try to get hold of his arms, whilst I kicked his shins to the uttermost. Considerable execution might be done this way; and it was looked on as fair when the parties were unequally matched; indeed, sympathy was apt to be with the little one.

No lower boy could reckon surely on one

moment of his time, even to do his exercises (which he might be flogged for not having done); no, not to get his own breakfast: and yet it was, in reality, by no means such an infliction as it reads; custom deprived it of all disgrace, and had brought it to work smoothly enough.

I do not defend it; I am not going to argue about it. The fact is undeniable, that many of the greatest legislators of the most truly free country the world has seen (and in her greatest day), were brought up, first as slaves, and then as slave-owners. Albeit, Wisdom hath uttered her voice in the streets, 'cried aloud: 'Train up a child in the way he shall go,' &c.

Shall we go to 'be construed' at my tutor's? We assemble, to the number of twenty or thirty (he takes only one form at a time), to hear him expound the lessons of the day, and answer his questions about them. You paid attention or not, as you pleased. He also corrected our verses and themes, left with him for the purpose. There was a custom, just then in its infancy, of taking 'private pupils,' who attended the tutor at extra hours, out of school, to do what was called 'private business' (and paid extra). Fortunately for me, my father, a rigid follower of the old school, would not hear of this, and I escaped.

Yet, one piece of 'private business' I did, for which I, and not he, paid. Our school Homer was in two large octavo volumes, the second of which was never used. I fitted up mine as a battery; got a solid block of wood, and nailed it into him; mounted firmly on that a row of brass cannon, the whole length of Homer; loaded them to the muzzle; laid a train of powder all along the touch-holes; put the poker into the fire; called out 'Stand clear!' and applied it to the train. Homer sailed bodily up to the ceiling, and, like the king of France and his twenty thousand men, down again. I felt as if I had won a victory, and was duly applauded. But my dame, who, on hearing the explosion, had made a forced march, and came up in time to smell powder, took upon her to write an extraordinary gazette for me, to which Dr Keate paid marked attention. Only the head-master flogged, in the upper school. (There was a lower school, but *de minimis non curat lex*.) When an assistant-master wanted a boy flogged, he told the first who came to hand to 'complain of him' to Dr Keate, specifying the offence. This was done. The boy was 'put in the bill' (or list), and warned by the preceptor to attend at the proper time. There was a number of boys employed, in rotation, to perform various petty duties of clerks and messengers, and called preceptors. I have sometimes thought the word 'preposterous' must have been derived from them. The system of monitors, now so common, is a similar abuse; it is merely a saving of the expense of more masters. The school authorities are the gainers, the scholars the losers.

Will you look at another specimen of the way in which the classic tongues were taught in the first classical school in England? 'Saying'—repeating by heart—is going to begin. You see two or three assistant-masters in their desks, and little clusters of boys round them with books. The lesson consists of some thirty or forty lines of Virgil or Horace. The senior boy steps up, and, following Hamlet's advice to the players, 'leaves his damnable faces, and begins.' After three or four, or at most half-a-dozen lines, the master says: 'Go!' and the next in seniority takes his place.

So on, till the appointed lesson has been gabbled over. Then, like Cock Robin and Jenny Wren, 'when they came unto the end, they thus began again.' Nobody thinks of learning the lesson. The senior is upon velvet; the second and third nearly so; the rest, as their turn approaches, calculate, in a rough way, which practice makes perfect enough, whereabouts their parts are likely to be, and set to work accordingly to cram on the spot some six or eight lines. If your turn is past before you come into school, you go to the bottom of the class; also, if you are not ready when it comes, you may do the same; but that is considered shabby, because you thereby upset your neighbour's calculations, and may get him flogged. So you are bound in honour to take your own risk. If the master is very irregular in his quantities, that may throw out the readiest reckoner. But this seldom happens; he has been an Eton boy himself, and respects time-honoured custom. When 'time' is called—half an hour or three-quarters, I am not sure which—the farce concludes. No lessons were longer than this, except for one unfortunate class of small boys, who had, once a week, I think, a spell of an hour and three-quarters, known as 'long morning.' They used to be more despised than pitied for their sufferings. I have helped to hoot them coming out.

Now for Dr Keate in person! We are, in theory, ready to construe and parse a given portion of some Latin or Greek author, and, having had it already explained at our tutor's, should be so in practice. The majority, however, know no more about the matter than their sisters at home. (Let not modern young ladies take offence; I speak only of their charming grandmothers.) The doctor calls up any one at random. The operation lasts about five minutes, and other patients are successively put to the torture, until the college clock releases them. But more real torture is coming. All this time, preceptors have been flitting about, whispering in afflicted ears the magic word: 'Stay!' which means, 'Dilly, dilly, come and be birched.'

The school has broken up. The doctor descends from his throne, and stalks into the next room, followed by a party of the doomed, looking more or less uneasy, and by some indifferent, or even merry spectators, going to realise Rochefoucauld's ill-natured truth about the misfortunes of our dearest friends. So have I seen, on my way to the 'Grotta del Cane,' the dogs off duty capering nimbly by the side of the victims, and, if ever dogs laughed, laughing at them. So did I see the Guards marching out of London on their way to America, and doleful they looked. At last I said: 'Come! there's a hearty veteran, at any rate, going to the wars smiling!' Just then, he turned his horse's head under the gateway of Kensington Palace, and I recognised the old Duke of Cambridge, who had, as a piece of courtesy, been just leading his regiment out of town, and was going home to breakfast.

But we are in 'library,' used as a school-room. So insufficient was the space for the numbers then at Eton, and so unwilling were the authorities to make any, even needful outlay, that I have sat here among whole rows, on the floor; the preceptors who had to pass through literally walking over us. Great fun it was to them, treading on our toes; no less to us, tripping them up. There are cases around the walls of 'library,' once, I am willing to believe, bookcases. In these degenerate days, I

never heard of their containing anything but rods. And yonder is the block—not the headsman's—quite the reverse. If it were not so old and shabby, and if it had a bit of carpet, it would look like a pair of bed-steps. In front of it stand two collegers, to 'hold down'—not always a sinecure. If the doctor, as he is rather apt to do, gets at all over-excited, and delivers cuts analogous to wide-balls at cricket, their fingers sometimes suffer, and then he grins at them, as if it were a good joke. Another colleger unlocks a press, and takes out a few rods. Each consists of three long birchen twigs (no branches), bound with string for about a quarter of their length. You would never guess, from the look of a wolf, how he can bite; neither would you from the look of an Eton rod. They ought to be good for something. A charge of half-a-guinea for birch was made in every boy's bill, flogged or not. Say six hundred boys at ten shillings and sixpence—a pleasant little sum in 'Practice' for the doctor. But nothing, after all, in comparison of what John Bull pays in his year's bill for the punishment of his naughty boys.

Stop! Keate gives a vigorous hem! and proceeds to business. Holding up the bill, he calls out a name. A meek and frightened little individual answers to it.

'Complained of by your dame! Now, sir!'

'O please, sir, my first fault!'

(This was a privilege of impunity for the first slight—not great—offence.)

'Are you sure you haven't had your first fault?'

'O yes. Quite, sir!'

'Well, remember I keep a strict account. I shall know you again. You'd better not attempt any tricks with me; sure to suffer for it. Hem!' (Here a very fierce and omniscient look.)

'O no, sir!' and away he slinks. When he's safe and well out of the doctor's hearing, you and I may hear a chuckling whisper: 'Third time of asking, by Jove!'

Another name, and another apparition.

'Not saying!'

'Yes, sir!'

'Kneel down.'

He kneels on the block. How may I, in sufficiently dainty terms, express what follows? He—he—lowers his sails. The two collegers shake hands with him. You hear four little swishes—just from the wrist only; just enough to raise a blush, and all is over. No one takes much interest in the matter; neither public nor performer, hardly even the patient, who gets under sail again, and moves off.

But see; Keate is knitting his shaggy brows, and calls the next name in an angry voice. A wiry-looking, big fellow appears, resolute, made up for something serious.

'Out with a gun and dogs, sir?'

No answer.

A vicious nod—understood and obeyed at once. The collegers take a wary hold. The doctor tucks up his gown, receives a rod, and lays on in real earnest. Five savage cuts—on a statue—and the executioner flings away the stump of a rod; gives a grunt—in compliance with which a fresh weapon is handed to him. Four more cuts use it up, and he leaves off. 'There, sir! remember that!'

The boy has stood it out gallantly (about as much as he could do, though), and gets away as quick as he can, probably to give vent to his feelings in private.

It was not always so borne. There lies before me a little paper, yellow with age, containing a sketch of life at Eton in Latin heroic verse. I copy two lines from a picture of flogging, drawn from real life:

Nec fert tranquille penam—sed vociferatur,
Oh! Domine! Oh! Domine! Oh! Domine! Oh!
Domine! Oh! Domine! Eheu! !

Was ever sound suited to sense more touchingly than in that final 'Eheu!' Ludicrous interludes would occur. One winter-tide I had gone in to attend the evening sacrifice; just as the first stroke was about to be struck, pop went a candle-cracker, and out went a candle (glass beads, with spirit in them, which, if stuck in a candle, presently burst with the heat). Doctor stops, and stares, raises his hand to go on, when pop! went another—pop! pop! followed rapidly, until we were left in utter darkness. There was a reprieve; but the bill of that evening had to be paid with compound interest.

Disgrace might attach to a flogging received for any offence against the Eton boy's code of propriety—to flogging for itself, never. So far from it, there was a sort of disgrace in never having tasted birch; you had not paid your footing; you were not free of the society—you were a 'spooney.' To avoid this reproach, I have known a boy get flogged on purpose; and I have known general approbation accompany a flogging, when judiciously administered, which I still think it was. A little boy had attempted suicide, for no known cause. It was supposed he thought there was something fine in it—possibly, he had swallowed some classical food the wrong way. However, he got a slight flogging for it. The boys took up the tone, and laughed at him for a little fool. All the false dignity which might have magnified absurdity into mischief was annihilated, and he became like other boys.

Good reader, a faithful sketch of our Sunday life will, I fear, shock you. It would never do to put on one's best clothes—that was ignominious: you were 'a Sunday buck.' Surely we could not complain of that weariness of the flesh, over-much study, but as surely did we suffer from over-much church. Two long collegiate services on Sundays and whole holidays, and one on every half-holiday, made us sick of the whole subject. I did take a Prayer-book in with me the first Sunday, but never ventured to defy public opinion to that extent a second time. There were boys nearly nineteen years old, but such a thing as taking the sacrament was unheard of. In chapel, the reader (or Conduct) misconducted himself by gabbling and skipping. The masters, perched in desks aloft, just kept themselves awake by watching boys whom they 'spited.' The boys themselves had not many resources wherewith 'to palliate dulness, and give time a shove.' Kneeling with your head down, as if in deep devotion, you could indeed, unobserved, carve your initials on the seat. Let any serious gentleman or pious lady go into Eton chapel, and see the results. Sundry little scraps of paper would pass secretly from hand to hand—notes (and the sacredness of that post was never violated) chiefly relating to the details of forthcoming fights. This was the mischief which Satan most delighted to put into our hands in chapel. One more recreation there was, but only a favoured few could partake of it—those whose

places in chapel were just below the choristers. By pinching a little singing-boy at the proper moment, you might bring out a squeak instead of the true note. In the evening, there was 'Terrace.' Windsor Terrace was open as a public promenade, and fifth form were allowed to go, only full-dress was required. Even we boys had to put on the handsome old costume of 'shorts and silks.' One Sunday I looked into St George's Chapel, where service was just over. I heard tap, tap, tap, and saw a man walking backwards, and striking the pavement with a rod. Following him close, planting his steps where the rod had struck, came blind old George III.—the last time I ever saw him.

BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

CHAPTER XVII.—MR BRACKENRIDGE'S NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

CLIFF COTTAGE, as the reader is already aware, formed one of two small semi-detached houses standing on the outskirts of Normanford. The remaining house was dignified with the title of Beech Lodge, and was the residence of Mr Brackenridge the chemist. Mr Brackenridge's little establishment was supervised by his sister Hannah, a light-complexioned, demure-faced young woman, with quiet, sly manners, thoroughly devoted to her brother. Hannah's little scraps of local gossip, which she used to retail to Brackenridge over his meals, were generally regarded by that worthy as so much empty jabber, and treated with a contempt which he was at no pains to conceal; but of late, Hannah had found a subject for gossip in the sayings and doings of their new neighbour, Mr John English, as retailed her daily, with sundry amplifications and exaggerations, by Mrs Jakeway, and as noted by her own sharp eyes and ears, which never seemed to fail in interesting her brother. It was a subject, too, on which Hannah herself was never weary of dilating; for, to reveal a little secret, she had fallen in love, in her quiet, self-possessed way, with the handsome young photographer, and every little circumstance connected with him had a special interest in her eyes.

Gurney Brackenridge was sitting over his tea one evening, a few days after John English's interview with Mrs Winch, as related in the last chapter; and Hannah was sitting opposite to him, replenishing his cup as often as it was empty, and keeping him supplied with fresh slices of toast. The chemist detested both his shop and his profession, as, indeed, he did anything that necessitated labour, either of head or hands; and he generally contrived to reach home between seven and eight o'clock, leaving later customers to the tender mercies of his assistant. He had lately been prescribing for Mrs Jakeway, whose health was somewhat out of repair.

'Let her go on with the mixture as before,' said Mr Brackenridge, in reply to a remark by his sister, that the old lady was worse rather than better to-day.

'I was in to see her about an hour ago,' said Hannah, 'and found her quite nervous at the idea of having to pass the night all alone in the house.'

'All alone! How's that?' said the chemist, looking up with sudden interest.

'Oh, she contrived to quarrel with her servant this morning, and sent her about her business at a moment's notice.'

'That's Mother Jake all over,' remarked the chemist; 'always quarrelling with her servants, and always getting fresh ones.—But where's Mr E.?'

'Oh, he went out on business this morning by the train, and left word that he should not be home till some time to-morrow.'

'Not home till to-morrow?' said the chemist quickly. Then, after a thoughtful pause, during which he sat gazing intently into the fire, he said: 'You will be going in to see Mother Jake again, I suppose, before the evening is over?'

'Yes,' said Hannah; 'I promised to go in at half-past nine, and give the old lady her medicine, and see the premises all safe for the night.'

'And quite right, too,' said her brother. 'But, before you go in, Hannah, I will give you a pill, which you must strictly enjoin her to take the last thing before getting into bed: and, Hannah, while you are there, just contrive to leave unfastened the shutters and window of the back sitting-room. Do you understand?'

The eyes of brother and sister met in a long, steady gaze. 'I understand,' said Hannah slowly. 'It shall be done.'

It never entered into the mind of Hannah Brackenridge to question any order of her brother. Implicit obedience to his slightest wish was the rule of her life. Had Gurney said to her: 'Hannah, oblige me by giving Mother Jake a quarter of an ounce of prussic acid,' I think it probable that she would have complied with his request without demur.

Gurney, meanwhile, sat brooding at home in company with his pipe. Mrs Winch's refusal to reveal to him the nature of the hidden bond that united her and Lady Spencelaugh in a common grudge against the young photographer, still preyed an undigested wrong, upon his mind. 'Curse you both!' he muttered, shaking his fist at a china shepherd and shepherdess fixed in permanent loving embrace on the chimney-piece. 'I'll find out the secret for myself, without any help from you, Martha, my dear; and then won't I make her Ladyship pay through the nose to keep me quiet! Mother Jake says her lodger is always writing—that he keeps a journal—more fool he!—so there ought to be something among his papers, if I could only get at 'em, which would give me the clue to what I want to know. At all events, I'll try. Nothing risk, nothing have. I shall be a gentleman yet—I know I shall.'

Presently, he heard his sister letting herself in at the front-door. 'Well, have you made all square?' he said as she entered the room.

'I have done as you wished me to do,' replied Hannah.

'Has the old woman taken her pill?'

'Yes; I stayed with her while she took it.'

'Get me out the brandy bottle, and then you can go to bed as soon as you like.'

'Yes, Gurney,' said the obedient Hannah; and having set out the favourite black bottle, together with hot water and sugar, she kissed her brother on the forehead; and next minute he heard her going softly up stairs to bed.

The chemist sat smoking and drinking till the clock struck eleven. 'Old Mother Jake ought to be as sound as a top by this time, or else there's no virtue in my pill,' he muttered to himself; and putting down his pipe, he rose, and went quietly into the next room, taking the candle with

him. Having unlocked a drawer, he took out of it a pair of list slippers, a dark-lantern, a bunch of skeleton keys, a small life-preserver, a black overcoat, and a sort of skull-cap, made of the skin of some animal, with the hair outside, and having long flaps to come low down over the ears, and tie under the chin. After inducting himself into the overcoat, slippers, and cap—and so disguised, Hannah herself would hardly have known him at the first glance—he put the lantern, the keys, and the life-preserver into his pocket, blew out the candle, and let himself noiselessly out by a door which opened into the garden at the back of the house. The gardens of Beech Lodge and Cliff Cottage ran parallel one to the other, with only a low wall between them, than which the outer walls, shutting them in at sides and back, were considerably higher. The houses stood by themselves, with fields on three sides of them, which sloped gently up from the backs of the two gardens to where a thick plantation of young trees crowned the prospect.

The night was cold, calm, and overcast; and Hannah, sitting at her bedroom window shrouded in a thick shawl, could barely distinguish the black ominous shadow gliding stealthily over the sward below. At length it stopped for a moment, as if to reconnoitre, she still watching it with straining eyes; then, satisfied apparently that it was unseen, it leaped quickly over the dividing-wall, and half crouching, half running, passed swiftly out of sight, doubling back towards the rear of Cliff Cottage. Hannah had taken the precaution to open her window an inch or two at the bottom; and after listening intently for a short time, she heard a slight creaking noise, which she knew to be produced by the opening of Mrs Jakeway's window; followed by another and a fainter creak, as the intruder closed it behind him; and then Hannah knew that so far her brother had safely accomplished his purpose, whatever that purpose might be.

The heart of Gurney Brackenridge failed him a little when he found himself standing alone in the dark in the little room which he had entered in so felonious a manner; but a hearty pull at a spirit-flask, which he had not failed to bring with him, revived in some measure his fainting courage; and after the further stimulus of a double-distilled oath, muttered discreetly in his throat, he set about his perquisition with something of his old confidence. As a friend of Mrs Jakeway, he was well acquainted with the interior of Cliff Cottage, and knew the position of the furniture; so that a very slender ray of light from his lantern sufficed to guide him safely to the door of the room in which he then was. This room was on the ground-floor, and at the back of the house; but the object of which he was in search would be found, if anywhere, in the first-floor front, that being Mr John English's sitting-room. So up the stairs in his list slippers, Mr Brackenridge stole lightly, scarcely venturing to breathe till he found himself safe on the landing at the top. Three doors opened on to this landing—namely, that of Mrs Jakeway's bedroom, that of John English's bedroom, and that of the latter's sitting-room. Mr Brackenridge, applying his ear to the keyhole of Mrs Jakeway's door, could hear the old lady breathing stertorously as she lay asleep; and a grim smile stole over his face as he listened. Softly he turned the handle, and softly he opened the door—a little way, just far enough to

enable him to insert his arm, and draw the key from the inside. In another minute, Mrs Jakeway was safely locked up in her own room.

Mr Brackenridge's next proceeding was to enter John English's bedroom; but a brief glance round it, with the full light of his lantern turned on, was sufficient to satisfy his curiosity. Next into the sitting-room, where his first act was to draw the thick moreen curtains carefully across the windows, so that no ray of light could penetrate to the outside. Having closed the door, and feeling perfectly secure from intrusion, he lighted one of the two mould-candles on the table, and then refreshed himself with another drain from his flask. His scheme, so far, had succeeded admirably; but the most difficult part of it was yet to come. John English's brass-bound mahogany writing-desk lay on the table before him, but fast locked; and if none of the skeleton keys he had brought with him were capable of opening it, he would still be as far as ever from the object of his search. One after the other he tried them carefully and knowingly, in a style which seemed to indicate that it was not the first time he had fingered them; and one after the other they failed to touch the tongue of the lock, and were put aside as useless. The chemist's brow grew damp; his hands began to tremble; there was only one key left untried. He paused with it in his fingers for a moment, and glanced nervously around. The candle had guttered down for want of snuffing, and burned with a dull, unsteady flame; his own shadow, sprawling up the wall and half across the ceiling, struck him as hideous and unfamiliar. 'Serve me right for coming on such a fool's errand!' he muttered to himself. 'I wish I was well out of it.'

He inserted the last key in the lock as he spoke; it gave a little click, and his heart echoed the sound. He forgot his nervousness in a moment; and after opening the room-door, and listening intently for a couple of minutes, he went back lightly to the table, drew the candle nearer, and opened the desk. The first articles that engaged Brackenridge's attention were a number of letters, some of recent, and some of old date. A cursory glance satisfied him that the majority of them were merely business letters; but there were a few from John's sick friend at Nice, which gave promise of more interest, and the chemist deliberately set to work to read them through. He found several passages in them in which the names of Mrs Winch and those of the different members of the family at Belair, were mentioned; but for want of a clue to what John himself had written, most of the allusions were past his comprehension. There was only one passage that he thought it worth his while to copy, and even that referred to things which as yet were so many mysteries to him, but which he hoped would not be so for long. The passage in question ran as follows: 'What you tell me with regard to your recognition of the portrait of Mrs Winch's brother, and the note intended for Lady Spencelaugh which came so singularly under your notice, certainly seems to point to some hidden link of connection between yourself and these two women. The matter is undoubtedly worth further investigation, but I would not advise you to build too lofty a superstructure of hopes on so weak a foundation. From your description of Mrs Winch, I should imagine her to be a very dangerous sort of woman. Make yourself acquainted, if possible, with her antecedents and past history. If it is to

her interest to hide certain facts from you, it is equally to your interest to have those facts brought to light. I agree with you that, as it stands at present, the case is not one to call for legal assistance, but there is no knowing how soon it may be.

Brackenridge turned to the desk with heightened curiosity, and there, at the very bottom, under a further litter of business documents, he found a thin morocco-bound volume, labelled 'Diary,' on which he pounced with avidity. A very brief inspection of it was sufficient to enable him to find the date of John English's arrival at Normanford; and commencing at that point, he read forward carefully and steadily to the end. It was disappointing to find that end only brought him to a period some three weeks anterior to the date of his reading, after which time not a line had been written. Then, again, the Diary was by no means so fully written as he had expected to find it; to the chemist's thinking, it did not enter sufficiently into detail; its narration of interesting facts was by far too bald and commonplace. The only philosophy, however, was to make the best of it as it was; and with several growls of dissatisfaction, Brackenridge turned over one page after another, till he had gone completely through it. He read the account of John's recognition of the portrait; he read a copy of the note intended for Lady Spencelaugh, as closely as John could recollect the words (and that puzzled him more than anything); he read the account of John's reception at Belair; and, finally, he read how a certain local rhyme, relating to the bells of St Seven, had floated strangely into John's memory in the middle of the night. The interviews with Mr Edwin and Mrs Winch were after-events not set down in the Diary.

Brackenridge had gained something by his nefarious scheme, but certainly not so much as he had hoped for. He had gathered the vague outline of some dark conspiracy, in the meshes of which John English was blindly struggling; but beyond that, he had learned nothing. Baffled and enraged, he sat for some minutes brooding silently with the Diary before him. Suddenly, he heard the faint click of the garden wicket, and the crunching of gravel, as some one came up the little pathway towards the front-door. He started at the sound like the guilty scoundrel he was. In another moment he had put back the Diary and letters, and had closed the desk; but he had no recollection of the process afterwards. Then he blew out the candles, and stepping lightly, made for the door, hoping to get back undetected by the way he had come. But he was too late already; the intruder, who, indeed, could be none other than John English come back by the last train, had admitted himself by means of a latch-key, and was now rubbing his feet on the mat. Big, brawny fellow though Gurney Brackenridge was, he shunned the risk of an encounter in the dark with the sinewy young photographer, and shewed his wisdom thereby. With the instinct of despair, he turned back into the room, and winding his way noiselessly between the chairs and tables, made for one of the windows, and drawing the thick curtains on one side, slipped behind them, and breathed once more.

Scarcely was this accomplished, when John English entered the room. Mrs Jakeway, not expecting him home till morning, had omitted to place a candle and matches on the bracket in the

hall, and he was consequently still in the dark; but, after a few failures, he contrived to get a light from his fuseses.

'Phew! how close and fusty the room smells!' he exclaimed aloud. 'A little fresh air would be an improvement;' and stalking to the window where Brackenridge was not, he drew aside the curtain, and flung up the sash, and let the cool night-air into the little room. 'One last pipe, and then to bed,' said John still aloud; and presently a waft of Cavendish penetrated to where the chemist lay perdue, revolving black schemes of revenge against the man who had been the unconscious means of placing him in so dangerous a predicament. How slowly the lagging minutes seemed to wear themselves away till John English, having finished his pipe, shut down the window, and after a last glance round, took the light with him, and went to bed! Brackenridge now breathed more freely, and allowed his cramped limbs a slight change of posture; but he knew that there was still a long dreary watch to be undergone before he might venture to leave his hiding-place, and try to steal away on the chance of John being soundly asleep. He heard one quarter after another chimed by the clock of the little church on the hill; but not till five of them had come and gone did he venture to emerge from his hiding-place. His lantern had burned itself out by this time, and he durst not venture to strike a match. He made his way across the room in the direction of the door, as a child goes up stairs, a step at a time, slowly. He had passed the table, and had coasted safely round the easy-chair, which, with its great sprawling legs, formed a dangerous obstacle in the dark, and was groping with outstretched hands for the expected door, when he suddenly stumbled over John's travelling-case, which lay directly in his path, and in trying to save himself, he unconsciously clutched a frail mahogany whatnot, on which reposed several of Mrs Jakeway's most cherished ornaments, and so came headlong to the floor with a terrible crash. With an instinct that would have done credit to a practised burglar, he lay perfectly still. Through the thin dividing-wall, he heard the creak of the bedstead, as John sprang suddenly up; and then a doubting 'Who's there?' as though no answer were expected. None was given; and after a moment or two of intense silence, he heard John growl out something about 'those confounded cats,' and then turn over, to catch up the broken end of his sleep.

Brackenridge lay for fully half an hour among the fragments of Mrs Jakeway's china, without stirring a limb. At the end of that time, he gathered himself up slowly and cautiously, without making as much noise as would have frightened a mouse. Then the door was noiselessly opened, and he found himself on the mat outside, and everything quiet so far. There was the landing to cross next, and then the stairs to descend, after which he would feel himself in comparative safety. But there was a loose plank in the flooring near the top of the stairs, and of course (as he afterwards said) it was like his 'cursed luck' that he should happen to put his foot on it, which he did. John English slept as lightly as a Red Indian, and the familiar sound of the loose plank awoke him in an instant—awoke him to the consciousness that there must be some one in the house who had no business there, and with him, in such a case, action

followed instantly on thought. Brackenridge heard John's leap out of bed, and turning on the instant, he sprang at the bedroom door, and turned the key in the lock, having noticed previously that it was on the outside; then down the stairs, and through the lower room, and out of the French window into the garden at a headlong pace.

Strong man though John English was, the stout old door resisted all his efforts to open it, a fact which he was not long in discovering; so he turned at once to the window, which looked out at the back of the house, and flung up the lower sash—turned in time to see a dark figure speeding along the garden, evidently making for the wall, and so over that into the fields beyond. John was never without firearms—he had a hunter's love for them—and in a case on his dressing-table was a brace of pistols, from one of which the charge had not been drawn, and the little drawer in his looking-glass was full of caps. It was the work of a moment to find his pistol in the dark, and put a fresh cap on the nipple. The clouds had cleared away, and the stars were shining brightly; and just as the man had succeeded in mounting the wall, John took steady aim, and fired. The man gave a loud cry, and flinging up his arms, dropped to the ground like a piece of lead on the outer side of the wall.

'My God! perhaps I have killed him,' exclaimed John to himself with a shudder, for he had fired in the heat of his passion, without a thought for after-consequences; and he began to hurry on a few articles of dress, preparatory to going down to look after the burglar. But scarcely had two minutes elapsed, when his quick eyes caught sight of a figure hurrying up the sloping ground behind the garden, and evidently making for the shelter of the plantation at the top of the hill. John paused in his dressing, and watched the figure till it was lost to view among the young trees.

'I'm glad I didn't kill him,' murmured John to himself. 'Let the beggar go. He's not worth troubling about further; but I think he has got something that will make him remember his visit to Cliff Cottage.'

An hour later, the watchful Hannah, who had never been to bed, admitted her brother quietly at the front-door; and, like a sensible young woman, dressed his wound, and sympathised with him, without asking him any impertinent questions as to how he had come by his mishap.

CHAPTER XVIII.—KATAFANGO THE MAGICIAN.

Mr Brackenridge's wound, without being a dangerous one, was sufficiently severe to confine him to the house for several days. It was given out in Normanford that he had fallen and sprained his left shoulder, and as he had sufficient knowledge of surgery to enable him to dispense with the services of a doctor in the case, the secret of his night's adventure was confined to himself and his sister. Hannah tended him faithfully, and asked no questions; being, indeed, well aware, from previous experience, that her brother always 'cut up rough,' as he himself termed it, when cross-examined against his will. Mr Brackenridge's temper, which was not angelic at the best of times, was by no means improved by confinement to his own room; but his fits of captious irritability were interspersed with long hours of silent, gloomy

brooding, during which—so Hannah's feminine instinct told her—he was busy hatching some black scheme of revenge against his neighbour next door, a scheme which that taciturn and quietly-watchful young person determined to do her utmost to frustrate. She loved the handsome young photographer, this thin pale-faced girl, who was so shy and retiring, and yet who never blushed; loved him with a love which could not exactly be called hopeless, because no element of hope had ever entered into the composition of it. Hannah Brackenridge had too much cold good sense to dream, even in her wildest moments, that John English would ever seek to woo and win such a one as herself. She loved him prepositionally—with an *if*. If she had been very handsome, and very rich, and very accomplished, she would have striven to lure this wild hawk to her side, and put her jesses round him, and hold him as her own for ever. But being none of these things, being only a poor pale-faced girl, with scarcely a word to say for herself in the presence of strangers, she was fain to cherish her little dream of love as a flower on which no sun would ever shine. Mrs Jakeway and she were very friendly, and a day seldom passed without the chemist's sister paying one or more visits to Cliff Cottage; and thus it was that she made the acquaintance of John, who had always a smile and a pleasant word for the shy, quiet girl, who was so different in every way from her blustering, loud-voiced brother.

Mr Brackenridge was quite as glad to get about again, and look after the interests of his business, as his sister was to be relieved from further attendance on him as an invalid. There was no inhabitant of Normanford who talked, and surmised, and wondered more about the attempted burglary at Cliff Cottage, than the gossip-loving chemist, who had a long talk respecting it with the head-constable of the little town on the very day of his recovery; and who examined with much interest the bunch of skeleton keys which had been picked up in Mr English's room, and which, it was hoped, would ultimately lead to the discovery of the offender. The affair had been a source of considerable excitement in so small a place, and when Mr Brackenridge declared in open conclave in the smoke-room of the *Hand and Dagger*, that he had heard a pistol-shot on the night in question, but had been too lazy to get out of bed and inquire into the cause of it, he became quite an authority in the matter, and was taken by the button on the following morning, and treated to two 'sherries' and three 'bitters' by certain friends who had not been so fortunate as to hear his narrative of the previous evening. It was a fortunate thing, everybody declared, that Mr English was not in the habit of keeping money or other valuables in his writing-desk; and that beyond having his desk broken open, and his letters and papers tossed about, no harm had been done. The head-constable gave it as his opinion, to a small circle of private friends, that the whole affair bore the mark of a practised London hand, and that before the winter was over they would probably hear of other attempts, no great distance away. A shudder ran through Normanford at these tidings, the inhabitants of which became all at once very particular in looking after the fastenings of their doors and windows, those people being, as a rule, the most careful in that respect who had the least to lose. Mrs Jakeway had a famous time of it, you may be

sure. She had no less than eighteen invitations to tea at different houses in the course of the four weeks following the attack; and a little china shepherdess, which had been broken by the fall of the whatnot, was looked upon with much interest wherever she went. But days and weeks passed away without affording any clue to the perpetrator of the offence, and the topic was gradually worn threadbare by much discussion, and fell silently into the background, yielding place to the more immediate interests of the day.

As before stated, Normanford was six miles from any railway; but a rude two-horse omnibus, built for travelling over heavy country roads, ran twice a day to Duke's Hill Station, eight miles away, to meet the morning and evening mail trains. John English having certain business to transact at the other end of the county, started one bright frosty morning by the nine o'clock 'bus from Normanford. About a mile out of the town, they stopped to take up a passenger, who mounted to the roof, and took the vacant seat next John, and proved to be none other than Mr Brackenridge the chemist, also on his way to the station at Duke's Hill. The two men greeted each other with a hearty good-morning: to any one not absolutely his enemy, John English would have done no less. He disliked Brackenridge, and would have gone half a mile out of his way any day to avoid his company, and yet he had not been able altogether to shirk the intimacy which the other was so evidently desirous of forcing upon him; for it not unfrequently happened that in going to or returning from the town to his lodgings, he would be overtaken by Brackenridge, who always accommodated his pace to that of John for the remainder of the way; and unless a man is an absolute bear, he must in such a case speak when he is spoken to, even though his replies be confined to monosyllables. Then, again, John had been indebted to the chemist for finding him a trustworthy man to carry his apparatus when photographing about the country. There was a further bond of union between them—the bond which unites two men who are smokers, and capable of appreciating a good cigar. On two occasions, the chemist had sent Hannah into Cliff Cottage, with his compliments, and would Mr English oblige him by accepting a dozen weeds of a choice brand? and when your next-door neighbour does that, what can you do but accept the favour with thanks? So, on the present occasion, John and Brackenridge, sitting side by side on the top of the 'bus, entered into conversation readily and at once.

Normanford lies in a valley, as does also, despite its name, the station at Duke's Hill. The hill itself is about a mile away to the north, and must be crossed by a road, which winds right over its summit, before the railway can be reached. From the highest point of this road, there is one of the finest views in all Monksborough; and here the 'bus always halts for three minutes, for the double purpose of breathing the horses, and giving the passengers time to admire the extensive prospect. From one particular spot, a glimpse of the sea can be obtained over a break in the ridge of intervening downs, and this view was pointed out by Brackenridge to John. The sky was so unclouded this morning, and the atmosphere so clear and free from haze, that the distant line where sky and sea met was barely distinguishable.

'What is the name of that little island out there to the east?' said John. 'I have seen it several times in my rambles along the shore, but have never learned its name.'

'That is the isle of Inchmallow,' said the chemist. 'It lies three miles from the mainland. You have never visited it, I suppose?'

'Certainly not,' said John. 'Why should I?'

'For no reason that I know of, except that it can boast some interesting ruins, and you have a taste that way, I understand.'

'What are the ruins you speak of?'

'Those of the Hermitage of St Bertram.'

'And, pray, who was St Bertram?'

'Oh, one of those old Romish fellows who lived a tremendous while ago. He pretended that he saw visions; and he went and lived out on the island all by himself, a sort of half-and-half Crusoe, but without a Man Friday to bear him company.'

'But how did he obtain his food so far from the mainland?'

'Oh, by cultivating a patch of ground, I suppose; and by the offerings of pious folk who went out to him in boats. He lived in a hole hollowed out of the rock; and when he died, they made a saint of him, and built what they called a Hermitage over his cave, where a certain number of monks from the old abbey just beyond Easttringham used to go and reside turn and turn about. But the Hermitage is in ruins, and has been for centuries; only people say that the arch of the great window, and one or two other bits that are left, are as fine specimens of that sort of thing as you will find in a day's ramble; but, for my own part, I know nothing of architecture.'

'I must visit the little island,' said John, 'and see whether the ruins are worth sketching. What means of access are there to it?'

'Only name the day you would like to go,' said the chemist warmly, 'and there shall be as neat a little boat at your service as you will find within a dozen miles, together with a man to pull you there and back again.'

John, who had no desire to lay himself under further obligations to the chemist, would fain have declined the offer thus pressed upon him; but Brackenridge seemed so earnest in the matter, that after doing his best to back out of it, he was obliged to yield a reluctant consent.

'If convenient, you had better name an early day for your visit,' said Brackenridge. 'This fine weather may not last much longer.'

'To-day is Tuesday,' said John. 'I shall be disengaged on Friday, if that day will suit you, and the weather prove favourable.'

'Friday let it be,' said the chemist, as he made a note in his pocket-book. 'A man and boat shall be waiting for you at 10.30 A.M. at Finger Bay—rather an out-of-the-way place, by the by.—Oh, you know it, do you? Then that's all right.—And now, here we are at the station.'

When Mr Brackenridge reached home that evening, his first words to his sister were: 'Send down to the *Hand and Dagger*, and tell Jerry Winch I want to see him.'

'Jerry is here, waiting for you,' said Hannah.

'What brings him here, I wonder? But send him in, and leave us together.'

Brackenridge and Jerry were very good friends; indeed, it was through a well-simulated liking for the son that the chemist had won his first step in

the affections of the mother. Jerry looked up to Brackenridge as to a man of unlimited knowledge, who wielded the power of life and death in the shape of terrible drugs; and who could, if he were so minded, cause any one who offended him to wither away and die in some mysterious manner.

He came slouching in, in his usual shamefaced way, twirling his hat between his fingers, and seated himself on the extreme edge of a chair, in obedience to the chemist's bidding. Brackenridge had studied Jerry's peculiarities, and waited till the lad had swallowed a cup of tea, and devoured a couple of muffins, before asking him a single question.

'Well, Jerry, my man, and what has brought you up here?' he said at last, as the lad proceeded to rub his sleeve across his mouth.

'Pipanta is ill, and Jerry wants a charm to make her better.'

'What is the matter with her ladyship?' asked the chemist.

'She refuses to eat; she refuses to dance when her lord plays sweet music; she is no longer glad, but very, very melancholy.'

The chemist turned from the table, and sat staring into the fire for a full quarter of an hour, without speaking, Jerry meanwhile sitting patiently twirling his hat, but with a furtive eye on the plate of muffins, momentarily growing colder on the table.

'Jerry,' said the chemist, turning round at last, and speaking in a solemn voice, 'Pipanta is not ill—she is enchanted!'

A low cry escaped from Jerry; he half started up in his chair, and then sat down again, trembling violently.

'Yes, enchanted, cursed by a magic spell,' repeated Brackenridge. 'Katafango, the great magician, has cast an evil eye upon her. Pipanta will never recover, unless'—The chemist paused, and looked earnestly at his half-witted companion; but Jerry had not sufficient sense to fill up the hiatus with the question which would have come naturally to the lips of any one else, and Brackenridge waited in vain. 'Unless,' he resumed slowly and impressively—'unless Katafango, the great magician, were to die. In that case, Pipanta would certainly recover.'

'Oh, tell me,' cried Jerry, starting up, 'where does this great magician live? Jerry will go to him, and will pray him on his knees to spare the life of his lovely Pipanta.'

The chemist laughed a loud, scornful laugh. 'You don't know what you would ask, my poor lad,' he said. 'Katafango is king of the Toads; and when Pipanta dies, he will take her soul, and put it into the body of a poisonous toad, and it will remain a toad for ever. And then Mogaldo will follow the same fate: the spell is on them both.'

The lad started up, his mobile lips quivering with white passion, and his blue eyes all aflame. He sidled up behind Brackenridge's chair, and laying a long thin finger on the chemist's arm, said in a sort of shrill whisper: 'Jerry will kill him!'

'Hush! my poor boy; you must not talk in that wild way,' said Brackenridge soothingly. 'Do you know who he is—this terrible magician? You see him nearly every day.'

'No! Who?' said Jerry in an eager whisper.

'He who lives next door, who makes the sun

take pictures for him—the tall man with the long black beard.' Jerry fell back a foot or two in dismay. 'What stranger but he,' continued Brackenridge, 'ever played with Pipanta as he played with her the first time he saw her? It was then he cast his spell over her. Lovely Pipanta must die.'

'Pipanta shall not die!' exclaimed Jerry, all aglow with nervous excitement. 'Give Jerry some of that nice white powder out of the jar on the top shelf in the shop, and Jerry will mix it with what the magician eats, and he shall die. Hoo, hoo, hoo!'

'Nay, nay, Jerry, my man; that would never do,' said the chemist. 'We cannot prevent Pipanta dying, unless'—And again he paused, and looked earnestly at Jerry. 'Listen to me,' he resumed. 'He of whom we have been speaking is going on Friday to the island of Inchmallow, and I want you, Jerry, to row him across.'

'Want Jerry to do it? No, no, no; Jerry dare not!'

'Tush, man! he has no power to harm you, or I would not ask you to go with him. But to make everything quite sure, I will give you a charm which I have up stairs, locked up in an iron chest, with which you may set at defiance all the enchanters and witches in the world.—And now, come nearer; I want to talk to you seriously. You must be at Finger Bay at half-past ten on Friday morning. He will come there, and you will row him across to the island.—And now attend carefully to what I am about to say; and with that, the chemist's voice sank to a whisper. Jerry, sitting motionless by his side, drank in his words eagerly.

Half an hour later, Brackenridge himself let Jerry out by the front-door, and then stood listening to the lad's retreating footsteps, as he went swiftly down the hill. 'A devilish thing to do,' muttered the chemist to himself; 'but I'm not going to funk it now.' And as he turned to go indoors, he heard with a shudder the faint sound of Jerry's weird laughter far down the road.

THE SOURCE OF LABOUR.

SCIENCE has taught us that the processes going on around us are but changes, not annihilations and creations. With the eye of knowledge, we see the candle slowly turning into invisible gases, nor doubt for an instant that the matter of which the candle was composed is still existing, ready to reappear in other forms. But this fact is true not only of matter itself, but also of all the influences that work on matter. We wind up the spring of a clock, and, for a whole week, the labour thus stored up is slowly expended in keeping the clock going. Or, again, we spend five minutes of hard labour in raising the hammer of a pile-driver, which, in its fall, exerts all that accumulated labour in a single instant. In these instances, we easily see that we store up labour. Now, if we put a dozen sovereigns in a purse, and none of them be lost, we can take a dozen sovereigns out again. So in labour, if no labour be lost, as science asserts—for the inertia of matter, its very deadness, so to speak, which renders it incapable of spontaneously

producing work, also prevents its destroying work when involved in it—we should be able to obtain back without deduction all our invested labour when we please.

Imagine a mountain stream turning an over-shot wheel. It thus falls from a higher to a lower level. A certain amount of labour would be required to raise the water from the lower level to the higher; just this amount of labour the water gives out in its fall, and invests, as it were, in the wheel. If, however, when arrived at the lower level, the water were to demand of the wheel to be pumped up again, the slightest trial would shew that it would ask more than it could obtain, though not more than it had given. The wheel, if questioned as to the cause of its inability, must reply as others have done, that it has shut up part of the labour in investments which it cannot realise. The reason, as commonly stated, is, that friction has destroyed part of the labour. The labour is not, however, destroyed. Science has shewn that heat and labour are connected; labour may be turned into heat, and heat into labour. The labour absorbed by friction, is but turned into heat. If, however, we try to extract labour from the heat thus diffused through the different parts of the water-wheel, and make it available, we find ourselves quite at a loss. The heat gradually diffuses itself through surrounding bodies, and, so far as we are concerned, the labour is wasted, though it still exist, like Cleopatra's pearl dissolved in the cup of vinegar.

If no labour is lost, so neither is any created. The labour we exert is but the expenditure of labour stored up in our frames, just as the labour invested in the wound-up spring keeps the clock going. Whence, then, does all this labour originally come? We see the waste—how is compensation made? The answer is simple and easy to give. All the labour done under the sun is really done by it. The light and heat which the sun supplies are turned into labour by the organisations which exist upon the earth. These organisations may be roughly divided into two classes—the collectors and the expenders of the sun's labour. The first merely collect the sun's labour, so as to make it available for the other class; while, just as the steam-engine is the medium by which the steam gives motion, so this second class is the medium by which the sun's heat is turned into actual labour.

Still, the sun does not work only through organised labour: his mere mechanical influence is very great. With the moon—the only second post he deigns to fill—he produces the tides by his attraction on the sea. But for the friction of the earth and sea, the tides, once set in motion, would rise and fall without any further effort; but the work done in overcoming the friction is, though due to the sun and moon, not extracted from them, but by them from the earth. For it would take a vast effort to cause the earth to cease rotating. All this effort is, as it were, stored up in the revolving earth. As the tidal waters, then, rub along the bed

of the sea, or the waters on which they rest and the adjacent coasts, this friction tends to make the earth move faster or slower, according to the direction in which the tidal flow is. The general effect is, however, that the friction of the tides makes the earth revolve more slowly; in other words, that part of the energy of rotation of the earth, so to speak, is consumed in rubbing against the tidal waters. All the work, therefore, that the tides do in undermining our cliffs and washing away our beaches, is extracted by the sun and moon from the work stored up in the rotation of the earth. The diminution of rotation, indeed, is so small as scarcely to be perceived by the most refined observation, but the reality of it is now generally recognised; and this process, too, will apparently go on till the earth ceases to rotate on its axis, and presents one face constantly to the sun.

Thus we see that the destruction of the land by the sea, so interesting in a geological point of view, is partly due to the sun's action. Not only is he the source of the light and heat we enjoy, but he aids in forming the vast sedimentary beds that form so large a part of the crust of the earth, mixing the ingredients of our fields, and moulding our globe.

By heating the air, the sun produces winds, and some of the labour thus expended is made use of by man in turning his wind-mills, and carrying his wares across the sea. But there is another expenditure of the sun's heat more immediately useful to man. By evaporating the sea and other bodies of water, he loads the air with moisture, which, when in contact with cold mountain-peaks or cold masses of air, loses its heat, and, being condensed, falls as rain or snow. Thus the rivers are replenished, which for a long time supplied the greater part of the labour employed in manufactures, though the invention of the steam-engine is fast reducing relatively the value of this supply of labour.

But vast as the sun's power thus exerted is, and useful as it is to man, it is surpassed in importance by his labour exerted through organised beings. The above-named agents have one defect: on the whole, they are incapable of being stored up to any great degree; we must employ them as nature gives them to us. Organised existence, however, possesses the power of storing up labour to a very high degree. The means it adopts are not mechanical, but chemical. The formation of chemical compounds is attended with the giving out of heat, which, as we have said before, is equivalent to labour, and if of sufficient intensity, can by us be made available as labour, as in the steam-engine. Now we take iron ore, consisting of iron in combination with other substances. By means of great heat, the iron is set free in the smelting-furnace. The iron, then, in its change of form has, as it were, taken in all this heat. If, now, we take this iron, and keeping it from the influence of the air, reduce it to a very fine powder, and then suddenly expose it to the air, by the force of natural affinity it will absorb the oxygen of the air, and in so doing give out the heat before required to set it free from the oxygen; and if the iron be in small enough portions, so that the process is sufficiently rapid, we may see the iron grow red hot with the heat thus disengaged.

Now plants and trees, by the aid of the solar light and heat, remove various substances, carbon especially, from what seem to be their more

natural combinations, and in other combinations store them up in their structures. Take a young oak-tree with its first tender leaves; if deprived of the sun's light and heat, its growth would be stayed, and its life die out. But with the aid of the sun's rays, it absorbs carbon from the gases in the air, each particle of carbon absorbed being absorbed by the power of the sun, through the agency of the plant; and with each particle of carbon stored up, is also, as it were, stored up the labour of the sun by which that particle was set free from its former fetters. The sap of the plant thus enriched, returns in its course, and by some mysterious process is curdled into cells and hardened into wood. But the work by which all this was accomplished lies hid in the wood, and not only is it there, but it is there in a greatly condensed state. To form a little ring of wood round the tree, not an eighth of an inch across it, took the sunshine of a long summer, falling on the myriad leaves of the oak.

Lemuel Gulliver, at Laputa, was astonished by seeing a philosopher aiming at extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Had he but rightly considered the thing, he would have wondered at any one's troubling to make a science of it. The thing has always been done. From Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden eating sweet fruits, through the onion-eating builders of the pyramids, down to the flesh-eating myriads of our land, this process has always been going on. The active life of reasoning man, and his limitless powers of invention, need for their full development a vast supply of labour. By means of the vegetable kingdom, the sun's work is stored up in a number of organic substances. Man takes these into his system, and in the vessels and fibres of his body, they resume their original combinations, and the labour of the sun is given out as muscular action and animal heat. To allow a larger supply of labour for man's intellect to work with, Providence created the herbivorous races. Some of these further condense the work of the sun involved in plants, by taking these plants into their systems, and storing up the work in them in their flesh and fat, which, after some preparation, are fit to be received into the frame of man, there, as the simpler vegetable substances, to supply heat and labour. Others, extracting work from the vegetable kingdom, just as man does, and mostly from parts of the vegetable kingdom that are not suited to the organs of man, are valuable to man as sources of labour, since they have no power to invent modes of employing this labour to their own advantage. Man might have been gifted with a vaster frame, and so with greater power of labour in himself, but such a plan had been destitute of elasticity, and while the savage would have basked in the sun in a more extended idleness, the civilised man had still lacked means to execute his plans. So that Good Providence which formed man, devised a further means for supplying his wants. Instead of placing him at once, on a new-formed planet, it first let the sun spend its labour for countless ages upon our world. Age by age, much of this labour was stored up in vast vegetable growths. Accumulated in the abysses of the sea, or sunk to a great depth by the collapse of supporting strata, the formations of a later age pressed and compacted this mass of organic matter. The beds thus formed were purified by water, and even by heat, and at last raised to within the reach of man by subterranean

movements. From this reservoir of labour, man now draws rapidly, driving away the frost of to-day with the sunshine of a million years ago, and thrashing this year's harvest with the power that came to our earth before corn grew upon it.

Such are the processes by which the sun's power is collected and stored up by the vegetable kingdom in a form sufficiently condensed to be available for working the machinery of the bodies of men and beasts, and also to assist man in vaster expenditures of labour. It is most interesting to trace such processes, and not only interesting, but also instructive, for it shews us in what direction we are to look for our sources of labour, and will at once expose many common delusions. One hears, perhaps, that something will be found to supplant steam. Galvanism may be named; yet galvanism is generated by certain decompositions—of metal, for instance—and this metal had first to be prepared by the agency of coal, and in its decomposition can give out no more labour than the coal before invested in it. It is as if one should buy a steam-engine to pump up water to keep his mill-wheel going. The source of all labour is the sun. We cannot immediately make much use of his rays for the purposes of work; they are not intense enough; they must be condensed. The vegetable world alone at present seems capable of doing this; and its past results of coal, peat, petroleum, &c. and present results of wood and food, are ultimately all we have to look to.

To say that man will ever be dependent upon the vegetable world for all his work, may be considered bold, but there is certainly great reason to believe it. The sun's labour being supplied in such a diluted form, each small quantity continually supplied must be packed in a very small space. Now, man can only subject matter to influences in the mass. The little particle of carbon that the plant frees each instant is beyond his ken. The machinery he could make would not be fine enough: it would be like trying to tie an artery with the biggest cable on board the *Great Eastern*. Organised existence possesses machinery fine enough to effect these small results, and to avail itself of these little instalments of labour. At present, this machinery is beyond our comprehension, and possibly will ever remain so. Nature prefers that her children should keep out of the kitchen, and not pry into her pots and pans, but eat in thankfulness the meal she provides.

Some interesting results follow from what has been stated above. One is, that we are consuming not only our present allowance of the sun's labour, but also a great deal more, unless the formation of coal in our age equals its consumption, which is not probable. Mother Earth will certainly, so far as we can see, some day be bankrupt. Such a consummation is pointed to, however, in other quarters. The sun's heat, unless miraculously replenished, must gradually be dissipated through space. There are reasons for thinking that the planets must ultimately fall into the sun. These things, however, possess to us no practical physical interest. Such countless ages must elapse ere they affect man's material condition upon earth, that we hardly can gravely consider them as impending. The chief interest they excite is moral. Like the man's hand that appeared to the revelling king, they write 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' (Weighed, measured, limited, doomed) on our material world, and dimly point to some power

that stands, as it were, hidden from our view behind the screen of matter, 'that shall make all things new.'

A POPULAR DEMONSTRATION.

BY OUR HOME CORRESPONDENT.

MONDAY, July 23d, was an eventful day; if not, as some contend, for the cause of liberty throughout the civilised world, at all events for Bayswater, W. Contrary to all custom, the omnibuses starting thence for the south-east in the evening were fully loaded—not crowded, for there were few inside; but their roofs were lined with our bravest and our best (or at least our best-dressed), bound for the Marble Arch, Hyde Park, reputed to be the seat of Civil War. We have no amusements in Bayswater, beside Scientific Lectures, Poetic 'Readings'—everybody seems to try his virgin voice (if I may use the expression) at our local institution, before advertising himself as a public reader to the metropolis at large—and more rarely a genteel Giant or musical Dwarf; while the theatres, except the Marylebone, which is not to be thought of by our gilt youth, are at an enormous distance. Anything, therefore, in the way of a spectacle, such as a fire or a fight, in our immediate vicinity, is looked upon as a godsend, and patronised accordingly by those gentlemen who have nothing to do with themselves in the evening, and whose digestions permit of their going out after dinner. It is unnecessary to state that your Home Correspondent, for his part, was actuated by no such idle impulse, when he mounted the knifeboard of the *Citizen*, bent upon a duty which by this time may surely almost be entitled National. However, in the very natural and appropriate phrase, used by novelists of the last generation but one, 'A truce to egotism.' (How I like all the charming expressions of those ancient fictionists: 'But we anticipate,' 'Pardon the digression,' and 'Now let us return for awhile to Sebastian and Leonora, whom we left in the subterranean chamber.') My fellow-passengers, as I have hinted, wore a very different appearance from those prim, neatly-attired gentlemen who ride into the City every morning to read their newspapers in the privacy of their own office, undisturbed by domestic interruption. They were indeed the same individuals, but how changed! Attired in evening-dress, their shirt-studs flamed upon their embroidered fronts, their waistcoats bore in their embroidery 'the evidence of a female hand' (if it was not done by the machine), and their polished leather boots, shone upon by the setting sun, fringed the omnibus with flame. Instead of sucking the knobs of their umbrellas, they had cigars in their mouths; and instead of being contemptuously silent, they were all speaking at once. Your Correspondent looked and listened.

1st *Citizen*. Mark my words [I did]; there'll be a dooce of a row!

2d *Citizen*. Glad of it. Capital fun.

3d *Citizen*. By Jove! Think of the Horse Guards being called out; that's what I call a Rum Start.

4th *Citizen* (not at all connected with the preceding speakers, serious, of riper years, and with an alpaca umbrella). Well, it's what I call an Infernal Shame, sir. Why don't they let 'em meet in 'Ide Park? That's what I want to know. Why, it's because the Tory ministry is afraid of the people; that's why.

2d *Citizen* (hilariously). Then you *don't* want to know.

Immense applause from the majority of Citizens, and great stamping of feet.

Conductor of 'Citizen' (with preternatural gravity and winking). I say, gents, here's a widdler lady inside, who is very high frightened to fits. She says the roof is a-givin' way.

Redoubled enthusiasm, in which the polished leather boots take a still more prominent part. Amid the tumult, the 4th *Citizen* is heard to murmur: 'Counter-jumpers—set of scoundrels.'

5th *Citizen* (sympathiser with No. 4). They would be very well in the tread-mill; that is the proper place for fellows who can only use their legs.

1st *Citizen* (defiantly). I daresay *your friends* will find the use of their legs as soon as they see the Police.

4th *Citizen*. Oh, you're one of the Hairystocracy, are you? Well, I will say *this* for you: you don't look like it.

2d *Citizen* (convulsed with merriment). That was a good one.

Nobody speaks; such a silence ensues—broken only by the 'Bank! Bank!' of the cad—as is only too likely to precede a storm. The Home Correspondent assumes an attitude of the strictest neutrality, and congratulates himself that he is next the steps. His grave demeanour misleads his neighbour, *Citizen* No. 1, to imagine him to be a person of information.

'Do you think it is likely,' he inquires, 'that the troops will fire with ball?'

'Very likely,' interposes *Citizen* No. 4. 'They have their orders to butcher the people. It'll be another Peterloo: there isn't a doubt of it.'

1st *Citizen* (with renewed anxiety for my opinion). What do you say, sir?

'Yes,' exclaims 4th *Citizen*, suddenly resolved to make a friend of me, if possible; 'what do you say? You look as if you weren't *all* glitter and gewgaws, you do. [I study in my attire a severe simplicity.] Is it not ten to one that the troops will fire with ball?'

The position was embarrassing: I could sympathise with the members of the German Bund, compelled upon the instant to throw in their lot with either Austria or Prussia; but my natural intelligence did not desert me.

'Well,' said I, 'a conflict between the populace and the soldiery is always to be deplored.'

'Pooh! pooh! shoot them down,' exclaimed No. 7 *Citizen*, with irritation: he wore a moustache, and was altogether a most distinguished-looking person. 'Against a mob, there's nothing like a twenty-four pounder.'

'Except a thirty-six pounder and all the other pounders,' muttered No. 2, purple with mirth, but a little awed by the superior appearance of the last speaker.

'It is my opinion that a man who can talk of bringing twenty-four pounders to bear upon his fellow-countrymen ought to be *hung*,' observed *Citizen* No. 4, staring straight before him.

'I would pull his legs with pleasure,' added *Citizen* No. 5, buttoning his coat across his chest.

There was another dreadful pause, the sort of calm that precedes a thunder-storm, as it seemed to me, and then *Citizen* No. 1 recommenced his persecutions.

'You have not yet given your opinion, sir, as to whether the troops will fire ball.'

'Well,' said I, with a smile that might have conciliated a regiment of Uhlans, 'the Horse Guards, you know, as a general rule, do not fire ball, because they are armed with *swords*.'

'Ah! that's true,' observed No. 1, sagaciously.

'Very true indeed,' remarked No. 4, with equal seriousness.

By one judicious reply, I had established my reputation; I had become the arbiter between the contending factions—the Napoleon of the knife-board. Some of my fellow-travellers would, I am confident, not have been surprised if I had turned out to be 'connected with government.' I saw, however, that the man with the moustache detested me, for he felt himself placed in the position of second-fiddle. However, he was at the other end of the 'bus.

'Talking of firing ball,' observed the conductor of the *Citizen*, 'I can tell you a good story—a story as will make you all split with laughing.'

The reward thus promised for listening was not attractive, and, besides, one is likely to be compromised by entering into conversation with this class of person; their anecdotes are often broad, and the tone in which they are delivered is the same by which they are accustomed to attract the attention of possible passengers on both sides of the way. I therefore refused him my countenance: an omnibus cad, however, has face enough (of his own) for anything, and he favoured us with his narrative notwithstanding. We had already reached the Edgeware Road, and my hope (on account of the widow lady inside) was that he would not approach his climax before we reached the Marble Arch.

'Well, you must know, my *father*,' he began, 'was a tremendous feller for standing upon his rights. He thought himself quite as good as a lord or a bishop, or, for that matter, as the king upon his blessed throne; and the consequence was, he was agin the milingitary, he was, at the Bristol riots; we used to live down that way in those days; I'm a Somersetshire man myself, though you mightn't think it.—White Chapel, London Bridge.—Well, my *father* and a friend of his, they was among the Mob, when the milingitary was a-shooting over their heads with—*Bank, Bank*—blank cartridge; but presently the other man, he claps his hand behind 'im, and he cries out: "Bill, they're a-firing ball!"'

"How do you know *that*?" asks my father.

"Because," says he, very serious, "I've just got one in."

'The Marble Arch!' cried I, interrupting the narrative. 'Stop, I am going to get down.' And, indeed, it was just as well, for there was here a crowd so dense, that the omnibus was brought to a complete stand-still. The whole breadth of the Bayswater Road, and as far down Oxford Street as the eye could reach, was paved with heads. I could see the police in a double line, standing with their backs to the closed gates: three rows of vehicles, intermingled with persons on foot, formed an inextricable mass between them and the opposite mansions, the lower windows of which were closed and shuttered, but the upper crowded with faces; nay, the roofs, and even the bases of the chimneys had their occupants. Every lamp-post bore its twin-fruit of street urchins. The wheeled conveyances, too, had no intention of moving, even if movement

had been practicable; they had come as to the inner ropes of the course at Epsom, for the purpose of affording their tenants a good view. There were empty coal-carts, for a position in which a shilling a head was eagerly given; there were cabs whose roof was hired by the square inch; there were omnibuses that had never gained half the sum by a city trip which they now realised by standing still; and there were even private carriages with ladies in them, apparently devoid of fear, and contemplating, with the greatest interest, the little they could see of the Civil War raging within the Park. It was to the Park, from which confused shouts and outcries were borne to us upon the darkening air, that every eye was turned.

My fellow-passengers, like myself, had all descended from their perches, the party of Order and the Malcontents alike pushing through the crowd for a spot where the iron railings had been thrown down for a length of about thirty yards; their stone foundations still held them in a slanting position, so that it was difficult to cross them; but in one place, one or two of the iron spears had been broken at the bottom, and through their yielding shafts, as I understood, a number of persons had already forced themselves into the forbidden ground. It was at this spot that the great conflict, of which we have since heard so much, had taken place an hour or two before.

'A curious sight, sir,' observed an individual, gazing with awe upon the work of devastation, and whose appearance and apparel suggested one of those members of the Dissenting body who assimilate very nearly to the High-Church party of the Church of England. He had the high rolling collar, and the high buttoned waistcoat, and the starched cravat of the divine, and yet with something wanting in the clerical *tout ensemble* which made me set him down as I have described. He had also called me 'Sir,' and clergymen rarely use that word, even when addressing a stranger. Yes, he was clearly a Dissenter; probably a Radical; possibly a sympathiser with these excesses. I make it a rule to ingratiate myself with every class, where I can do so without shocking my moral sense, and I thought I would sympathise with them a little too.

'Curious indeed,' said I. 'There is no knowing where these things will end. I am afraid a mistake has been committed by somebody.'

'Ah, you may say that,' answered he solemnly. 'A grave responsibility has been incurred.'

Yes; I was right: his speech smacked of the Nonconformist pulpit.

'You are come here,' said I, 'like myself, I do not doubt, to enter your protest against these proceedings; to bear witness, if necessary.'—

Here I hesitated, for him to declare his views; but he only shook his head in a deprecatory manner, and observed: 'Just so.'

'To uphold the sacred right of Public Meeting,' remarked I boldly: it was worth while to be misinterpreted in order to elicit the opinions of a man of this sort.

'The sacred right of Public Meeting,' assented he, in the tone of one who is committing something to memory. 'Just so.'

This man was not an enthusiast: his opinions were evidently the result of calm conviction. I wanted a companion, during the spectacle, who would unfold the motives of action of the Party of Disorder, and here he was.

'We can see nothing from here,' said I; 'if this hole in the railings was but a little bigger, one might creep through.'

'Just so,' replied he, with a manner so imperturbable that it quite irritated me.

While we talked, there were occasional 'Alarms and Excursions'—numbers of people within-side, fleeing before the advance of the police or military, would return to their hole in the railing, the spikes of which being towards them, rendered exit exceedingly difficult. Only one at a time could pass through; there were dozens desirous of doing so at the same moment; and close behind them were supposed to be horse-soldiers at full speed. You may imagine the scene.

'If somebody was to pull out those two spikes,' remarked I reflectively after a retreat of this description more disastrous than usual, 'they would not run in people's eye when they tried to get out.'

One of those good-for-nothing man-boys who form such a large portion of a London crowd, happened to overhear this observation, and full of the spirit of mischief, at once proceeded to put my playful suggestion into effect. He pulled out the two iron javelins in less time than it takes me to write it. Scandalised by his conduct, and even alarmed lest it should be attributed to my directions, I cried out to him in a terrible voice to throw them among the trees, and fortunately he did so. Think of the remorse (independently of any term of imprisonment) which would have seized upon your Home Correspondent had the mob proceeded to arm themselves with iron javelins.

'An apt pupil,' observed my unknown friend, gravely; 'but a young gentleman likely to find himself in trouble.'

This I felt to be rather a personal observation, and one that needed a reply.

'Nay,' said I, 'he has really done no harm. Consider the danger of those spikes; and particularly in the case of these adventurous ladies.'

If it were possible that a gentleman of the ecclesiastical profession could so far forget himself as to wink with meaning, I should say that my companion here forgot himself to that extent: and yet there was a gravity about the action of the eyelid that rescued the movement from the imputation of mere lightness.

The crowd about us was almost wholly composed of respectable persons, attracted to the scene by curiosity; there were very few 'roughs' remaining on our side of the railings; and throughout that night I did not see half-a-dozen genuine 'working-men,' the real political reformers having probably adjourned to Trafalgar Square, to hear the speeches. The women, too, of whom there was a considerable number, were by no means of the lowest class; I should say the majority were domestic servants, who had asked leave to 'step out for an hour to see their cousin,' and had come to see the *émeute* instead. There were, however, one or two old hags, who, thinking they scented blood in the air, expressed the most sanguinary wishes with respect to both the present and future of the police force, and reminded one very much of those terrible old women who used to sit and knit stockings in front of the guillotine, while aristocrats' heads were being chopped off.

'What are the men afraid on, od rot 'em!' observed one of these ladies. 'Why don't they cut all the Bobbies' throats; there's enough of ye, ain't

there?' added she, turning furiously upon your Home Correspondent.

A bow and a smile were all the adhesion I could find it in my conscience to give her.

'Come, the milingitary won't hurt you, Susan,' cried a cheery voice, as a stout middle-aged female pushed past me, accompanied by a florid, honest-looking girl, with cherry-coloured ribbons in her bonnet; 'you'll go right to their hearts for all their curious ears' (she meant their breastplates); 'so who's afraid?'

'And I'm sure you needn't be afraid of the perlice, Jemima,' retorted the girl, laughing, 'for I never saw a Bobby yet as you couldn't soften.'

If that fair pair were not respectively cook and housemaid, I am prepared to forfeit my situation upon this *Journal*. To see them squeeze themselves through the gap in the rails, was a spectacle not only diverting, but, especially in the case of the cook, prolonged; and if one of those panics to which I have alluded had taken place while that lady was in entire possession of the exit, the scene would have combined every element of interest—heroism and beauty, terror and a *cul de sac*.

'Really,' said I to my new acquaintance, 'I think we might venture where even the ladies go. There, now we have done it.' (We were both standing in the forbidden ground.) 'The Rubicon of the Law is passed. We have thrown in our lot with the people: eh? Hurrah!'

'Just so,' replied my imperturbable acquaintance.

Throughout the shrubbery, there were knots of people—specks of light, for they were all smoking pipes—talking over what they had seen during the evening's proceedings, and exchanging the most exaggerated lists of killed and wounded; a few, as you could tell by the noise of breaking branches, were far more mischievously employed; these last, however, were, without exception, members of that dreadful race, the Man-boys. We pushed across the shrubberies to the carriage-drive, and lo, a really pretty sight! the Horse Guards marching to and fro at a foot's pace in double line, with the moonbeams glinting on their naked swords and polished helmets; and the dark masses of people on both sides the way cheering them loudly. Then would follow a line of horse-police, whereupon the most hideous screeching and vituperation rent the air. 'Butchers! ah-h-h-h!' (a very expressive ejaculation of hatred.) 'Go home. Ah-h-h-h-h!' These were the noises, the conflicting nature of which we could not understand, and had therefore so excited us when on the other side of the barrier. It was a very trying position for the gentlemen in blue, and I am afraid that the military—some of whom, perhaps, had their private reasons for not entirely sympathising with their allies—rather enjoyed it: at all events, many of the soldiers were grinning.

'I dare say these red-coated gentry,' observed I, in allusion to this circumstance, 'are not sorry to see their rivals in the affections of Susan and Jemima so unpopular?'

My companion was silent; surprised that he did not give utterance to his 'Just so,' I looked at him, and perceived his face to be convulsed with angry passion. He muttered something between his clenched teeth, and quickened his pace so as to get a few paces in front of me. It was evident that his feelings were stirred to their lowest depths; he was doubtless a physical-force Chartist; a Red Republican of the deepest dye. I was trying to recall some of the wilder doctrines of Ledru Rollin,

in order to keep him in good-humour, at all events, with *me*, when a hand lightly touched my sleeve, and a voice whispered a few rapid words into my ear. I knew the speaker: it was a policeman in whose Bayswater beat my house was situated, and my wife had done some kindness to *his* wife, when she happened to stand in need of help.

I rejoined my companion with a heart that had almost stopped beating. His glance struck me, for the first time, as being singularly malevolent; his voice seemed to me to have grown gruff, and even discourteous, as he inquired 'What I thought of the sacred right of Public Meeting in Hyde Park *now*?'

'A chimæra,' replied I eagerly. 'It's all nonsense. Why *should* Hyde Park be given up to such a rabble? Nay, why, indeed, should people wish to meet at all?'

My companion shot at me a terrible glance of suspicion, as he remarked: 'And yet you sympathised with them, sir, an hour ago!'

'I did,' said I frankly. 'But I honestly tell you I have been convinced of my error. People that *his* the police must be an abominable and wicked crew. I wonder for my part the civil force are so patient. [They really *were* wonderfully patient, so far as I saw.] Fortunately, however, these wretches are not armed.'

'No; no one thought of pulling up the iron spikes in the railings *except you*,' answered the other in a tone which, combined with the pressure of the crowd, had all the effect upon me of a warm bath.

'Yes,' said I, 'that idea of mine was an indiscretion, I own. In case of necessity, however, I should always range myself—I am sorry to differ from you, if your feelings are with the other side, but I must express my sentiments—along with the *Party of Order*. If the odds were forty to one, I should side with the civil force; that, as it seems to me, is the duty of every citizen.'

'I am glad to hear you say so, *for your sake*,' answered my mysterious acquaintance.—'There, don't ask any questions; but take my advice, young man, and go home to your family. There are some here who will pass the night much less comfortably, and you don't know how near you have been to being one of them.'

'Ha, ha!' said I, with forced hilarity; 'very good. But, indeed, I think you advise wisely. The tea, too, will be getting cold at home.'

With a short stern nod of farewell, my companion turned away, and as he did so, took out a leaf from a leather note-book, and tore it into fragments.

I hastened to the place of exit between the rails, scarcely less precipitately than the victims of pusillanimous Panic, pushed my way through the foolish crowd that were still gazing longingly into the forbidden Eden, and leaped into a four-wheeled cab.

The words which the friendly Peeler had whispered into my ear, were these: 'Take care what you may be saying, sir; the man as has got *hold of you* [fancy!] is a detective in disguise; and if you're not careful, he'll have a case against you as sure as you're alive.'

Had I been careful, and had he not got a case against me already? That was the question. If ever a man felt himself a Conservative from top to toe, it was your Home Correspondent for that last quarter of an hour. My conversion had been as

genuine as it was rapid. No wonder that that Mysterious Myrmidon of the law had credited my assertions, and been mollified by those expressions of good-will: they had truly come from the heart—if, at least, the heart is the seat of prudential alarm. That judicious reference to the domestic 'tea waiting for me at home' was really, I think, very commendable, considering the tremendous nature of my situation, and a proof of great presence of mind. Your Home Correspondent, however, was never more convinced of the truth of that famous conundrum—Q. What is better than presence of mind in circumstances of personal peril? A. Absence of body—than when he found himself safe at his own house after attending that Popular Demonstration.

THE DART.

Flow onward, onward, onward flow

In stream and winding lake,

And change the shadows glassed below,

Of hill, and wood and brake.

Flow onward, onward, onward flow;

The deer is nought to thee:

Their rest, thine anchored lilies know,

But thou must always flee.

Flow on, thou downward gliding water,

Through all the silent dark;

While sleep the fields, the reaper's daughter,

The partridge, and the lark.

Flow onward, onward, onward flow;

Dark battlemented towers

With crimson-curtained lights may glow;

Thou sharest not their hours.

Flow onward, onward, onward flow,

The swift sea-billows call,

The snarling beach is creamed with snow,

The hissing thunders fall;

The sea, the sea! the air of dawn!

The yellow morning-light!

Flow onward, onward, onward borne,

Broad river, to the fight.

Well done in all thou hadst to do!

Rest, rest within the sea;

How glorious spreads the sparkling blue,

A kingly pall for thee!

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